

Agenda Item 2.1: Strategy for the Assessor's CAMA¹ / Property Tax Objectives

Strategic Advisory Council
April 2, 2010

Background: King County currently uses a 25-year-old legacy system, Property Based System (PBS)--for assessing property (CAMA system), calculating levy rates and collecting taxes. PBS is a complex and cumbersome array of 400 application programs that have evolved since the 1970s.

The main problem is that the application programs are no longer meeting the current business needs of Department of Executive Services - Treasury Operations and the Assessor's Office and cause significant risks to the business.

It is time consuming and costly to make required changes within the current system. Quality control is frequently compromised because it is difficult for staff to check for accuracy and spot errors. PBS is also heavily dependent on staff with an institutional knowledge of the entire system and its multitude of idiosyncrasies. As staff retires, institutional knowledge is lost and the risk of system problems and failures is greatly compounded.

A brief summary of the major issues and proposed approach for resolving those issues is included in **Exhibit 1: Presentation slides: Strategy for the Assessor's CAMA/Tax Property Objective.**

Additional information about current problems, goals, options for going forward and expected outcomes is included in the **Exhibit 2: Strategy for Property Based System Replacement.**

YOUR ACTION IS REQUESTED

1. **Provide your questions/ input in advance of the meeting.** If you have questions or input related to this subject, we would appreciate receiving your feedback in advance of the meeting. For questions please contact David Martinez; otherwise, please e-mail your input associated with this agenda topic to Maureen Weisser. Maureen will be collecting all input provided by the members. We will introduce the received feedback at the SAC meeting for discussion.

¹ CAMA - Computer Assisted Mass Appraisal

2. **SAC Action at the meeting: Endorsement.** The members will be asked to vote on:

- ❖ Identifying the PBS replacement as a priority for the county
- ❖ Joint Assessor's Office and DES sponsorship for the effort
- ❖ Approach as outlined in the presentation and meeting materials
- ❖ Including strategic objective for Property Based System replacement in 2009-2012 Strategic Technology Plan.

Exhibit 1: Presentation: Strategy for the Assessor's CAMA/Tax Property Objectives

Agenda Topic 2.1

Strategy for the Assessor's CAMA / Property Tax Objectives – DRAFT

April 2, 2010
Presented by:
ASSESSOR'S OFFICE

Property Based System - PBS

AGENDA:

- Overview of the business problem related to CAMA¹ / Property Tax and the organization's approach to resolve the issues

EXPECTATION:

- SAC Endorsement for including in Strategic Technology Plan

¹CAMA - Computer Assisted Mass Appraisal

Business Problem

- High risks to the ability to bill and/or collect taxes:
 - 30-yr-old mainframe outdated, lacks functionality and does not meet many requirements and mandates
 - Antiquated architecture limits integration, workflow automation, data accessibility and tax roll integrity
- Operational constraints prevent use of modern data collection technologies:
 - Wireless broadband for real-time server connection
 - GPS tagging to improve collection efficiency, data depth and security

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Business Goals, Success Factors, Priority

- Eliminate risks to the Assessor and Department of Executive Services (DES) business:
 - Assessing value for tax purposes, establishing levy rates and accurately calculating taxes due
 - Billing, collecting and distributing property taxes
- Flexibility to update, add technology, conform to new regulations and laws
- Ability to optimize data collection and gather greater “high value” data for the county and the private sector
- Top priority for the Assessor and the county as 78% of revenues now come from property taxes

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Approach

- Validate 2007 Quantifiable Business Case:
 - \$11.2 million one time cost; \$850K annual support
- Re-evaluate costs in 2010 to potentially scale down 2007 estimates; staged approach to lower risks
- Deploy 3G/4G devices for real time data update
- Potential cost sharing and/or recovery with other WA counties
- Timeline: 2 - 3 year implementation

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SAC Endorsement

1. Identify PBS replacement as a priority for the county
2. Establish joint Assessor's Office and DES sponsorship for the effort
3. Proceed with the approach as outlined in the presentation and other meeting materials
4. Include strategic objective for Property Based System replacement in *2009-2012 Strategic Technology Plan*.

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Exhibit 2: Strategy for Property Based System Replacement

1. The Problems
 - a. High risk factor cited in 2005 Moss Adams report
 - b. Age of mainframe, reliability, replacement parts
 - c. Existing coding constraints – limit of five decimal points
 - d. Maintenance and future coding – projected retirement of Cobol-trained coders and lack of new ones
 - e. Mainframe downtime to sync levy codes and re-run failed batch processing
 - f. Nightly batch processing failures require too much effort to correct

2. The Goals
 - a. More reliable, less expensive server platform
 - b. Greater flexibility in coding and database management
 - c. Seamless integration between Assessments and other business systems
 - d. Extend operational flexibility in the field
 - e. Create a data collection system that is easy to use, more reliable and committed to the database in real-time
 - f. Create a forward-looking system that optimizes the Assessor data collection to gather greater “high value” data for the county as well as the private sector
 - g. Develop a system approach with input from Assessor, Treasury and others

3. The Options Going Forward
 - a. Build a project framework that accomplishes several things:
 - i. Allow immediate restart of the PBS project development
 - ii. Solicit feedback from PBS project team members
 - iii. Review, revise and re-circulate new RFP
 - iv. Bring new RFP, with new milestones and budget estimates, to the Project Review Board (PRB) for conditional sign off
 - v. Get conditional sign off of PRB so preparation of RFP can begin
 - b. Develop new, slimmed down RFP, and solicit proposals around three possible scenarios:
 - i. Complete “plug-n-play” package to replace CAMA and Treasury side while connecting to Oracle Financial
 - ii. A hybrid that interfaces with existing CAMA system and Oracle Financial
 - iii. An in-house built system with outside consulting and/or term-limited employees
 - c. Develop a new budget for the PBS replacement project, as well as GPS-oriented build-out, including:
 - i. New estimated budget for PBS replacement
 1. Identify key phases and budget deployment
 - ii. Updating and improving existing data collection equipment
 1. Newer model Tablet PCs

2. User-friendly dashboard for field data collection including mentor support after training
 3. Research & testing of possible deployment alternative data collection devices with wireless broadband.
4. PBS Outcomes
- a. Move Assessments totally off mainframe onto a server based system by December 2012
 - b. Reduce risk exposure from antiquated mainframe system, including higher legacy costs, risks of downtime, and dwindling number of skilled programmers
 - c. Create a seamless interface between Assessments, Treasury and others
 - d. Establishing the Assessor's data collection as the information base upon which other resources are added or built
 - e. Establish real-time data collection and updating
 - f. Allowing direct connection of field appraisers to server data and updating
 - g. Create more efficient, effective, and less costly collection and management of Assessor data